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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS
New York, 27 March-12 April 1995

COMMENTS BY THE COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS ON ANNEX I OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA OF 10 DECEMBER 1982 RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS

Submitted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the secretariat for the Working Party

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) has considered the elements relating to fishery statistics in the Draft Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/CONF.164/22).

2. The Working Party, which is currently being reconstituted as the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), has as its purpose:

- To keep under continuous review the requirements for fishery statistics for the purposes of research, policy-making and management, taking into account, inter alia, their purpose, usefulness, cost, burden in collection and collation, timeliness, quality, confidentiality needs and regional differences;

- To agree standard concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies for the collection and collation of fishery statistics;

- To make proposals and recommendations for action in relation to the collection, collation and dissemination of fishery statistics, recognizing the need to coordinate activities so as to avoid duplication.

3. CWP is composed of experts nominated by intergovernmental organizations which have a competence in fishery statistics. Experts from the following member or observer organizations participated in the Sixteenth Session of the CWP, held at Madrid from 20 to 25 March 1995:

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT);

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM);

Indo-Pacific Tuna Development and Management Programme (IPTP);

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT);

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES);

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO);

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);

South Pacific Commission (SPC);

Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT);

Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC).

4. FAO provides the secretariat for CWP.

II. COMMENTS BY THE COORDINATED WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

5. The following statement has been taken from the report of the Sixteenth Session of the CWP:

"In considering the Draft Agreement, in particular annex 1, 'Minimum standards for collection and sharing of data', CWP welcomed the specification of the roles of regional fisheries agencies and flag States in the collection and exchange of data necessary to meet stock assessment requirements and support management objectives.

"CWP recognized the importance of the stipulation of minimum data requirements in annex 1 of the Draft Agreement, which provides an important

specification of the data relevant to the conservation of the fish stocks as referred to in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, article 119 (2), as well as the general data requirements specified by the FAO Technical Consultation on High Sea Fishing and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

"CWP stressed that the standards in annex 1 of the Draft Agreement should be considered as the minimum standards for stock assessment and to support management objectives. It was recognized that, for particular fisheries, additional standards might apply.

"CWP recognized that the collection of certain types of data listed in annex 1, such as data on discards and by-catch, are not being undertaken by the majority of flag States at present. Nevertheless, CWP considered that all of the types of data listed in annex 1 were necessary for stock assessment, and that flag States which do not already collect the types of data listed in annex 1 should be encouraged to do so in the future.

"CWP recognized that assessments must apply to the biological unity of fish stocks. CWP therefore considered that the minimum standards in annex 1 should apply over the geographic range of fish stocks, whether it be within areas of national sovereignty or in international waters.

"CWP supported the requirement that States shall cooperate directly or through subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements to agree on the specification of data and the format in which those data are to be provided to subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements. CWP strongly encourages subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements to participate in the work of CWP in order to review the specifications and formats of data which they adopt.

"CWP further considered that the minimum standards in annex 1 should apply to all flag States, and not only to members of regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements.

"CWP considered that the subregional or regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements referred to in the two preceding paragraphs should also include intergovernmental organizations with a research or management advisory role."